

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A graphical user interface element, comprising:
an orientation indicator associated with a three-dimensional scene and visually indicating an orientation of the scene, and comprising:
view direction controls each indicating a direction of a corresponding view into the three-dimensional scene and causing a display view of three-dimensional scene to change to the corresponding view when selected.
2. An element as recited in claim 1, wherein an object in the scene is centered and sized to fit the display view when a scene change occurs responsive to selection of one of the controls.
3. An element as recited in claim 1, wherein the indicator is part of the three-dimensional scene, always positioned at a predetermined position in the display view and always substantially a same size in the display view.
4. An element as recited in claim 1, wherein the element comprises:
a central core control associated with a perspective view of the scene; and
axial controls peripherally positioned with respect to the core control, aligned with the axial dimensions of the scene and associated with corresponding front, back, top, bottom, left side and right side views.
5. An element as recited in claim 4, wherein the front direction control is different from the other controls.
6. An element as recited in claim 4, wherein the axial controls are each shaped to point at the core control indicating the view direction of the axial control.
7. An element as recited in claim 4, further comprising a non-axial control peripherally positioned with respect to the core control and indicating a direction of a corresponding view into the three-dimensional scene and causing a display view of three-dimensional scene to change to the corresponding view when selected.

8. An element as recited in claim 7, wherein the non-axial controls are specified by a user.

9. A process, comprising:
determining whether a view direction indicating control of an orientation indicator in a display view of a three-dimensional scene has been activated; and
orienting the display view to the view direction of the control when the control is activated.

10. A process as recited in claim 9, wherein the indicator is in the three dimensional scene and the process further comprises:
positioning the indicator in the scene to place the indicator in a predetermined position in the display view; and
changing the size of the indicator in the scene to fix the indicator at a predetermined size in the display view.

11. A process as recited in claim 9, further comprising:
centering a scene object in the display view; and
fitting the scene object to the display view.

12. A system, comprising:
display;
an input device used to make selections on the display; and
a computer coupled to the mouse and the display, displaying a three-dimensional scene on the display in a display view, the scene comprising an orientation indicator indicating the orientation of the scene, the orientation indicator comprising view controls indicating a view direction and the computer changing the display view to the view direction associated with a control selected by the mouse.

13. A computer readable storage controlling a computer by a process stored thereon determining whether a view direction indicating control of an orientation indicator in a display view of a three-dimensional scene has been activated and orienting the display view to the view

direction of the control when the control is activated.

14. A graphical user interface having three-dimensional directorial indicators indicating an orientation of a three-dimensional scene and that orient the view to the direction indicated when activated by a user.

15. A graphical user interface element, comprising:

an orientation indicator associated with a three-dimensional scene, visually indicating an orientation of the scene, part of the three-dimensional scene, always positioned at a predetermined position in the display view and always substantially a same size in the display view, and said indicator comprising:

view direction controls each indicating a direction of a corresponding view into the three-dimensional scene and causing a display view of three-dimensional scene to change to the corresponding view when selected, the view direction controls comprising:

a central core control associated with a perspective view of the scene and causing a display view of three-dimensional scene to change to the corresponding perspective view when selected;

axial controls peripherally positioned with respect to the core control, aligned with the axial dimensions of the scene, associated with corresponding front, back, top, bottom, left side and right side views, shaped to point at the core control indicating the view direction of the axial control with the front view direction control being a different color than the other controls and the axial controls being labeled with axial labels comprising part of the controls; and

a non-axial control peripherally positioned with respect to the core control by a user and indicating a direction of a corresponding view into the three-dimensional scene and causing a display view of three-dimensional scene to change to the corresponding non-axial view when selected, and

wherein an object in the scene is centered and sized to fit the display view when a scene change occurs responsive to selection of one of the controls.